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SENSITIVE  
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USDA FAS FOR OCRA/KUYPERS; ONA/SALLYARDS, MURPHY  
- OSTA/HAMILTON, BEAN  
PASS FSIS/JONES, DUTROW  
STATE FOR EUR/RUS  
STATE PASS USTR FOR PORTER, KLEIN  
BRUSSELS PASS APHIS/FERNANDEZ  
VIENNA PASS APHIS/TANAKA

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ETRD](#) [ECON](#) [WTO](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: RUSSIAN VET SERVICE USES TYPOS ON VET  
CERTS TO BLOCK TRADE

REF: A) HANSEN/DUTROW EMAIL, B) MOSCOW 2688, C)  
MOSCOW 2435, D) MOSCOW 2143

SENSITIVE BUT UNCLASSIFIED

1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The Russian Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) informed via official letter that correction letters from the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) will not be considered. Since the beginning of 2008, VPSS has ignored dozens of correction letters and made clear that no credence will be given to them or any future such letters. In addition, VPSS stated that all meat and poultry shipments that arrive to Russia with minor typos on accompanying veterinary certificates will be refused entry and returned back to the United States. Original scanned copy and courtesy translation were sent to FSIS on October 28 (REF A). An informal embassy translation of the backdated letter follows. END SUMMARY.

2. (SBU) BEGIN TEXT:  
Moscow, October 27, 2008  
No. FS-HB-2/10873

Assistant Deputy Administrator  
USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS)  
Dr. William James

The Federal Veterinary and Phytosanitary Surveillance Service (VPSS) renders its respect to the USDA Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS). In response to your request dated September 17, 2008, I send you a copy of veterinary certificate No. RFP-097425 issued for products manufactured at enterprise No. 3S.

Simultaneously, we report that VPSS has repeatedly informed FSIS about gross violations of the Russian laws in the veterinary field. The U.S. side is surely aware of these violations as it is constantly sending corrective letters on "clerical mistakes" made on veterinary certificates. Just over the period of September 2008, FSIS has repeatedly informed VPSS of the

typographical errors including the following:

Manufacturing dates were misspelled in certificates for pork cheeks RFP-121512 and RFP-1121514. There was a mismatch noted between numbers of certificates and numbers of certificates put on the boxes;

Meat processing plant numbers were not correct in pork veterinary certificate RFP-097565;

The "CRLU" entry was missing in front of the container numbers in poultry veterinary certificates RFP-044299, RFP-044326, RFP-044287, RFP-044288, RFP-044288, RFP-044297, RFP-044298, RFP-044307, RFP-044309, RFP-044327, RFP-044328, RFP-044329, RFP-044330, RFP-044342.

These facts, once again, demonstrate that the U.S. veterinary service seriously lacks control over livestock products shipped to the Russian Federation and that necessary measures needed to address this issue is not being taken.

Besides, pursuant to your letter and in accordance with U.S. laws, FSIS does not have authority of meat and poultry shipments once they leave the facilities. In this connection, VPSS will not consider letters related to meat and poultry shipments to Russia that were detained at port due to violations of Russian veterinary and sanitary requirements. In accordance with Russian Federation veterinary laws, these

products must be returned back to the United States.

Doctor James, accept my assurances in the deepest respect.

Attachment: in 2 pages (not included in this telegram)

Deputy Head  
N.A. Vlasov  
END TEXT.

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COMMENT  
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13. (SBU) VPSS has complained about the number of errors being found on U.S. veterinary certificates that accompany meat and poultry shipments to Russia for over a year now. Periodically, VPSS summarizes all of the typos found on veterinary certificates and, as in this instance, sends the list to FSIS via official letter with a threat to ban either the facilities in question and/or the entire U.S. meat and poultry industry unless measures are taken to stop the number of "gross violations of Russian veterinary rules and regulations". Post has reminded VPSS officials on numerous occasions that typos on veterinary certificates have nothing to do with food safety or quality of the product in question. Nevertheless, VPSS views minor and inadvertent clerical mistakes as "gross violations of veterinary regulations" putting them in the same category as detection of food pathogens and antibiotics.

14. (SBU) VPSS has worked overtime to build a case against FSIS to show that it is incapable of ensuring that U.S. meat and poultry meet Russian veterinary regulations so that trade can be restricted when deemed necessary. Post's internal investigation showed that only 0.25

percent of total U.S. meat shipments to Russia in 2007 arrived with veterinary certificates with typos. While most would consider this to be an acceptable margin of error that comes with large trade volumes, VPSS believes otherwise by enforcing a strict zero tolerance policy on all human error. Post encourages Washington addressees to seek higher-level intervention and demand that Russia accept international standards in such cases as called for by international setting bodies.

BEYRLE